

Exhibit A

February 18, 2020

VIA OVERNIGHT DELIVERY

Board of Directors
SOUTHWEST AIRLINES CO.
P.O. Box 36611
Dallas, TX 75235

Re: Southwest Airlines Co. Stockholder Litigation Demand

Dear Board of Directors:

We write on behalf of our client, Douglas Komen, a stockholder of Southwest Airlines Co. ("Southwest" or the "Company"). Mr. Komen demands that Southwest's Board of Directors (the "Board") investigate, address, remedy, and commence proceedings against certain of the Company's current and former officers and directors for breaches of fiduciary duties, and violations of all other applicable laws, rules, and regulations, including, but not limited to, federal aviation regulations, related to the wrongdoing alleged in this demand, as detailed below.

OVERVIEW

Southwest is a major passenger airline in the United States. According to the latest data from the U.S. Department of Transportation ("DOT"), the Company is the largest domestic air carrier in the United States, as measured by the number of domestic originating passengers. In 2019, over 162 million passengers flew with Southwest. The Company currently operates 747 Boeing 737 airplanes across the United States.

According to an audit report from the DOT Office of Inspector General ("OIG"), Southwest is presently under renewed scrutiny for its failure to maintain sufficient maintenance records for airplanes that carried millions of passengers over the past two years. Southwest's current failure to comply with federal aviation regulations is an on-going problem that continues to manifest to the detriment of the Company. For years, Southwest has failed to maintain and operate its aircraft with proper maintenance records in violation of U.S. aviation regulations. The Federal Aviation Administration ("FAA") has previously fined Southwest several times, amounting to over ten million dollars in penalties, in response to Southwest's lack of or inadequate records for its airplanes' maintenance and repairs. Southwest's current noncompliance exposes the Company to further regulatory scrutiny and liability, including civil fines from the FAA.

By permitting noncompliance with federal aviation regulations, Southwest's directors and officers expose its airplanes and passengers to potential safety risks, reduce the Company's revenue due to flight delays and cancellations, and negatively affect consumer confidence and preference in selecting Southwest over other airlines. Southwest also incurs other expenses in connection with its failure to adhere to U.S. regulations, such as legal and operation costs sustained by internal investigations and responses to outside investigations and/or potential lawsuits.

The officers and directors of Southwest owe their shareholders the fiduciary obligations of good faith, loyalty, and due care. In accordance with these fiduciary duties, Southwest is required to control and manage the Company in a fair, just, honest, and equitable manner, which includes its legal obligation to adhere to all U.S. regulatory requirements, such as federal aviation regulations. By failing to comply with federal aviation regulations, Southwest's officers and directors violated these core fiduciary duties to the fiscal detriment of the Company and its shareholders.

SOUTHWEST CURRENTLY FAILS TO FOLLOW FEDERAL AVIATION REGULATIONS

On January 30, 2020, the DOT OIG draft audit report revealed that Southwest flew more than 17 million passengers over the past two years on airplanes with unconfirmed maintenance records. According to the DOT OIG, nearly two-thirds of the FAA employees interviewed have concerns over the safety culture at Southwest. Furthermore, several FAA officials disclosed that Southwest is frequently slow or resistant to providing the FAA with safety information during their interviews with the DOT OIG.

Southwest's unconfirmed records for aircraft inspections, maintenance, and repairs not only violates federal aviation regulations, but also prevents the FAA from assessing whether Southwest has completed all mandatory repairs, inspections, and maintenance for dozens of Southwest's airplanes. By failing to maintain reliable paperwork and records, neither Southwest nor regulators are capable of confirming and verifying that Southwest airplanes satisfy all safety requirements.

Southwest's current lack of proper safety records is traceable back to its purchase of used Boeing 737 airplanes from foreign airline carriers. Southwest purchased 88 used Boeing 737 airplanes from foreign carriers located in Canada, Argentina, Turkey, Russia, and China. As of November 11, 2019, Southwest lacks complete safety records for 38 of the 88 Boeing 737 airplanes.

Southwest's lack of maintenance records is so alarming that Clayton Foushee ("Foushee"), the head of the FAA's Office of Audit and Evaluation, recommended immediately grounding more than four dozen of Southwest's foreign airplanes in October 2019. Foushee took specific issue with Southwest's inability to certify to the FAA or to the public that its airplanes meet mandatory safety standards.

Foushee highlighted that Southwest failed to sufficiently oversee its third-party maintenance contractor, which Southwest tasks with inspecting its airplanes and vouching that prior maintenance satisfies U.S. regulatory requirements. For instance, from 2018 to 2019, Southwest's third-party contractor did not report over 432 repairs to the FAA, including some repairs that did not conform to U.S. regulatory standards. At least two aircraft also had previously unnoticed paperwork discrepancies. Southwest had not even translated all of the foreign maintenance records into English before operating its used, foreign Boeing 737 airplanes.

Furthermore, U.S. Representative Peter DeFazio ("Rep. DeFazio"), the chairman of the House Transportation Committee, similarly urged in an October 2019 letter that the FAA should not allow Southwest to operate these airplanes unless the FAA concludes with absolute certainty that Southwest's airplanes are airworthy.

SOUTHWEST'S HISTORY OF FAILING TO FOLLOW FEDERAL AVIATION REGULATIONS

Rep. DeFazio and Foushee's concerns are both legitimate and well founded. This is not the first instance of appropriate requests for Southwest to ground its airplanes due to inadequate safety and maintenance records. For instance, the FAA grounded more than 30 of Southwest's airplanes in November 2018 due to a lack of inspections.

Southwest has a history of failing to comply with U.S. regulatory requirements and incurring costly fines. In 2008, the FAA sought a \$10.2 million fine against Southwest for flying airplanes that Southwest had not properly inspected for fuselage cracks. At the time, the FAA's proposed fine was the largest ever sought. The FAA found that Southwest pilots flew nearly 60,000 flights on 46 planes that Southwest had failed to inspect for fatigue-related cracking of the fuselage area. Due to a lack of inspections, Southwest operated six airplanes with fatigue cracks—an oversight that should have not occurred had Southwest conducted the required inspections. Southwest eventually settled with the FAA for \$7.5 million.

In 2014, the FAA again sought a civil penalty against Southwest, this time for \$12 million, because the FAA found that Southwest failed to comply with federal aviation regulations when repairing its aircraft. The FAA blamed Southwest and its third-party contractor for failing to follow proper procedure when replacing fuselage skins on its Boeing 737 airplanes. Specifically, the FAA found that Southwest and its contractors did not install fasteners when applying sealant to the new fuselage skin panels and failed to properly shore up the repaired aircraft. Southwest and its contractor also failed to properly install ground wire on the water drain masts of two of its Boeing 737 airplanes. Southwest later settled with the FAA for \$2.8 million.

In 2015, the FAA proposed yet another fine against Southwest after determining that Southwest had improperly recorded a temporary repair to the aluminum skin of one of its Boeing 737 airplanes as a permanent repair. The FAA alleged that Southwest operated this aging aircraft for almost 25,000 flights without performing the required periodic inspections on the temporary repair. Southwest was also faulted for operating this airplane for over 4,800 flights beyond the flight threshold by which it was required to have performed the permanent repair.

SOUTHWEST MUST COMPLY WITH FEDERAL AVIATION REGULATIONS

In accordance with its fiduciary duties of good faith, loyalty, and due care, Southwest and its officers and directors are legally obligated to comply with all federal aviation regulations. Southwest's officers and directors responsible for ensuring the Company's compliance, include, but are not limited to, David W. Biegler ("Biegler"), J. Veronica Biggins, Douglas H. Brooks ("Brooks"), William H. Cunningham, John G. Denison ("Denison"), Thomas W. Gilligan

("Gilligan"), Gary C. Kelly, Grace D. Lieblein ("Lieblein"), Nancy B. Loeffler, John T. Montford, Ron Ricks ("Ricks"), Tom Nealon, Michael G. Van de Ven, Robert E. Jordan, Tammy Romo, Mark R. Shaw, Andrew Watterson, and Greg Wells. Southwest also specifically tasks its Safety and Compliance Oversight Committee and Audit Committee with ensuring its legal obligation to comply with federal aviation regulations. The Safety and Compliance Oversight Committee's functions include:

- periodically assessing the Company's safety and operational compliance obligations and associated risks and performance relative to those standards;
- reviewing such policies, programs, and procedures as it shall deem necessary, including the Company's safety and operational compliance reporting systems;
- meeting regularly with management of the Company to assess the Company's safety and operational compliance practices generally, including assessing the adequacy of the resources, training, communications, risk assessments, and auditing of operational processes directed towards supporting safety and operational compliance;
- assessing whether the Company's safety and operational compliance practices support the Company's Code of Ethics;
- periodically reporting to the Board on the adequacy and effectiveness of the Company's safety and operational compliance programs and making recommendations to the Board regarding the Company's safety and operational compliance practices generally[.]

As members of Southwest's Safety and Compliance Oversight Committee, directors Biegler, Brooks, Denison, Gilligan, Lieblein, and Ricks violated and continue to violate their fiduciary duties by failing to assess the effectiveness of Southwest's maintenance, repair, and safety records within the context of federal aviation regulations. Furthermore, these directors and officers abdicated their responsibility to recommend corrective measures to the Board to ensure compliance with federal aviation regulations.

Each of the above officers and directors are in breach of their fiduciary duties by knowingly approving the Company's improper practices; or abdicated their responsibility to oversee the Company's internal controls, including its obligation to comply with all federally mandated inspection and records requirements. Southwest's present failure to comply with federal regulations demonstrates that its directors and officers are ineffective in their management of the Company. As noted above, Southwest's history of regulatory problems and present noncompliance reflect its lack of maintenance records are a systemic, reoccurring, and ongoing problem. By improperly managing the Company, Southwest's directors and officers violated and continue to violate their duties of loyalty, good faith, and due care.

DAMAGES TO SOUTHWEST

In light of the DOT Office of Inspector General (OIG) report, Southwest acknowledged in its Annual Report on Form 10-K for the year ended December 31, 2019 filed with the U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission that the Company will potentially incur additional costs and revenue losses due to its noncompliance with federal aviation regulations, noting:

The Company strongly disagrees with many of the draft statements and conclusions in the report and is not aware of any action the FAA might take against the Company arising from the OIG's audit of the FAA; however, the issuance of new FAA regulations, regulatory amendments, or orders or directives could result in flight schedule adjustments and groundings or delays in aircraft deliveries, as well as lower operating revenues, operating income, and net income due to a variety of factors, including, among others, (i) lost revenue due to flight cancellations and disruptions as a result of a smaller operating aircraft fleet, (ii) the lack of ability to make corresponding reductions in expenses because of the fixed nature of many expenses, and (iii) possible negative effects on Customer confidence and airline choice.

Southwest has expended and will continue to expend significant sums of money as a direct and proximate result of the misconduct described herein. Such expenditures include, but are not limited to, liability to additional FAA civil penalties and fines, subsequent market capitalization loss in response to potential FAA penalties and fines, increased operational costs to correct its inadequate internal controls for maintenance and safety records, the costs incurred in investigating and defending Southwest and certain officers and directors in FAA and other government investigations, decreased revenue from grounded airplanes that cannot operate due to a lack of maintenance, safety, and repair records, and costs incurred from compensation and benefits wrongly paid to individuals who breached their fiduciary duties to the Company.

Further, the Board's inability to implement and maintain adequate internal controls over safety and repair maintenance records and the Company's failure to timely disclose material information exposes Southwest to significant reputational damage within both the business community and the capital markets. In addition to price and product quality, Southwest's current and potential customers consider a company's ability to curb known abuses and implement adequate controls to ensure illegal practices are timely discovered and properly addressed. Customers are less likely to do business with companies that knowingly permit and/or encourage unscrupulous behavior, and investors are less likely to invest in companies that lack internal controls and fail to timely disclose material information. Southwest's ability to attract customers and investors is now impaired. In addition, the Company's ability to raise equity capital or debt on favorable terms in the future is now impaired. Southwest stands to incur higher marginal costs of capital and debt due to the increases of the perceived risks of investing in and lending money to the Company.

STOCKHOLDER DEMAND

Given the above, our client demands that the Board take all necessary steps to investigate, address, and promptly remedy the harm inflicted upon Southwest as a result of the misconduct described herein. In particular, our client demands that the Board investigate the circumstances surrounding Southwest's failure to maintain safety and maintenance records in accordance with federal aviation regulations and violations of any other applicable laws, rules, and regulations. In addition, our client demands that the Board investigate any other violations of applicable laws, rules, and regulations. Accordingly, the Board must undertake an investigation of the wrongdoing detailed herein by independent and disinterested directors with the assistance of independent outside legal counsel. The investigation should, among other things, be sufficient to determine:

(a) which current or former Company employees, officers, and/or directors were responsible for, and/or had knowledge of the Company's inadequate internal controls over compliance with federal aviation regulations on safety, maintenance, and repair records;

(b) which current or former Company employees, officers, and/or directors were responsible for, had knowledge of, and/or played an active role in the Company's failure to comply with applicable laws and regulations, including federal aviation regulations;

(c) which Company employees, officers, directors, and/or agents, current or former, were responsible for, had knowledge of, and/or played an active role in oversight of all of the foregoing;

(d) the extent to which the current or former Company employees, officers, directors, and/or agents benefited as a result of the breaches of fiduciary duty owed to the Company and its stockholders; and

(e) the extent to which Southwest was damaged by all of the foregoing.

Following the investigation, our client demands that the Company commence legal proceedings against each party identified as being responsible for the mismanagement and other related misconduct described above. The legal proceedings should bring claims for breaches of fiduciary duty and indemnification and contribution, among other relevant and appropriate claims. The legal proceedings should also seek recovery of the salaries, bonuses, director remuneration, and other compensation paid to the parties responsible because these parties were unjustly enriched by such compensation.

The Board must commence these legal proceedings as expeditiously as possible, keeping in mind the relevant statute of limitations periods. Because of concern that the proceedings cannot be initiated prior to the expiration of the relevant statute of limitations, the Board should secure tolling agreements from all potential defendants, which will allow the Board to complete its investigation and pursue all appropriate legal remedies. Moreover, to the extent that relevant statute of limitations periods expire prior to the Board commencing legal proceedings or obtaining

tolling agreements, the Board must investigate and pursue claims for breaches of fiduciary duties and/or legal malpractice against those who allowed any statute of limitations periods to expire.

Finally, the Board must take all necessary actions to reform and improve its corporate governance and internal procedures to comply with all applicable laws and to protect Southwest from committing future wasteful acts. Additionally, any future resolutions to the Company's Bylaws or Articles of Incorporation should be put to a stockholder vote, and the following actions may be necessary to ensure proper corporate governance policies:

(a) a proposal to strengthen the Board's supervision of operations and develop and implement procedures for greater stockholder input into the policies and guidelines of the Board;

(b) a proposal to strengthen the Company's controls over Southwest's compliance with federal aviation regulations, including, but not limited to, safety and maintenance records;

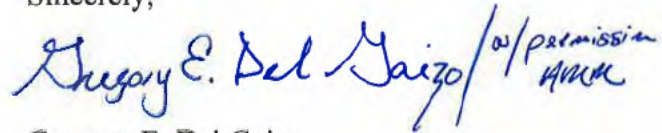
(c) a proposal to strengthen the Company's disclosure controls;

(d) a provision to establish a system for intake of employee complaints regarding potential violations of laws and regulations occurring at the Company; and

(e) a provision to permit the stockholders of Southwest to nominate at least three independent candidates for election to the Board.

Should you have any questions or concerns about this matter, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Gregory E. Del Gaizo". To the right of the signature, there is a handwritten note in blue ink that says "w/ permission AMK".

Gregory E. Del Gaizo